## Karen Vitlip

# Two Chances Slim and None

Ladies: You've seen it on television! You've read it in print! The word's out everywhere—"You've come a



Thanks to Virginia Slims.

The super-deluxe, once-in-alifetime, extra-special, no-two-alike, not-to-be-missed, fantashot-as-pancakes, get-'embest-thing-towhile-they-last, ever-happen-since-the-silly-millimeter-longer, greater-thanstep-right-up-and-putgreat. terrific, your-money-down, brand new cigarettes For Women Only.

The only trouble is the women of Sacramento don't seem to be smoking them. And the men who are would rather not talk about it.

A spot check among local stores uncovered the fol-

lowing regarding Slims' sales:
"We're lucky if we sell a carton a week'"... The Bottle Shop

"The only thing Virginia Slims have done for us is increase our inventory"...Cork-n-Bottle No. 1.

"We don't even sell them" .... Corum's Wines and

What's Virginia Slims to do?

The trouble, as one local girl said, has nothing to do with the name of the new digarette. Admittedly, Virginia Slims does have a nicer ring to it than Virginia Fats:

The trouble is not with the For Women Only campaign either. Interviews in a number of smoke-filled rooms proved the ladies are extremely flattered at having a cigarette to call their very own

In fact, in one exceptionally smoke-filled locale, one women went so far as to rank the invention of Virginia Slims right along with the rib theft from Adam's cage, 'Susan B. Anthony's successful march for suffrage and the replacement of bustles and bloomers with bikinis.

### Statement Lost Impact

Where the statement lost much of its impact, unfortunately, was that the lady was smoking Winstons at the

Eventually, the core of Virginia Slims' sales problem was exposed deftly and treated accordingly by Brenda Wikswo, a local nurse.

As she explained without benefit of novocaine: "I don't like the way they taste."

Continuing to beat around the bush, she elucidated, "I smoked them once and I'll never smoke them again. I was back in Marlboro Country on the next pack.

Another of Sacramento's Very Own Working Girls, Lorna Dillon, who's been known to smoke with the best of them especially when someone else is buying, commented boldly and bluntly after a brilliant opening Istatement:

"Frankly, I'm 100 per cent for women having their own cigarette brand. I felt very feminine the first and ast time I smoked a Virginia Slim and my eyes even watered a little bit I was so overwhelmed by the historymaking feeling it gave me.

"But I donated the rest of my pack to charity and have gone back to my usual brand: Tiparillos."

Perhaps the worst stab in the pack for Slims came from Union reporter Glenda Marie Crank, who issued the following statement to the press:

"I smoke Virginia Slims only when bumming. The menthol ones aren't too bad, but the regular type taste

Jike pulverized cardboard.'

How she knows what pulverized cardboard tastes

like remains to be disclosed.

In view of the fact the Virginia Slims' achievement for women's rights appeared in shaky standing in Sacra-mento, solutions were offered for improving sales.

### Suggested Bribery

Miss Dillon suggested bribery.

"Really, we've got to work to keep Virginia Slims on the market, even if I have to start snoking them myself. We can't let another monumental first for womanhood like this go to waste.

"But if I have to pay for them, that's another matter. I may have to think twice about my firm, decisive,

mmovable stand.'

It was suggested that Virginia Slims become integrated and open up legitimate over-the-counter sales to men. Thus, if the discrimination barrier was officially lifted, a man could proudly with head lifted high, walk up and say, "A pack of Virginia Slims, please," without thildren's eyes being covered by mothers' hands and every man in the store running out screaming.

The suggestion was voted down, however, one reaon being that would defeat the very reasoning behind

Virginia Slims existence.

As Miss Wikswo maintained, "Any guy who smokes Firginia Slims has a definite problem. I knew one who

did and his voice changed.''

One male, asked to remain anonymous and booked it, said, At first I felt discriminated against because the tobacco company didn't want me to smoke Virginia Slims. I did anyway and my mustache fell off.

#### 'He Rolled Me'

"The next day, I offered one to a panhandler and he rolled me.

In a last minute fit of desperation, it was deemed mandatory to call The Main Office of Slims for a "Save 'Sacramento Slims' Sales' suggestion right from the

Lauren Williams, The Boy Wonder from Benson & Hedges who earns his keep as brand manager of Virgina Slims was contacted along Park Avenue tobacco road in New York City.

According to Williams, the new cigarette is selling well the smoking demand is greater than the dwin-

dling supply.

"San Francisco is leading in sales nationally. Isn't Bacramento pretty close to it?" he asked, figuring the sales pattern would overlap.

Learning that it was but Slims' sales were going towhere here, Williams commented, "I've heard it said they go both ways in San Francisco.

He remained hang-loose about The Sacramento Sitpation, however.

"I wish I could offer a suggestion but I've got problems enough," he muttered.

"You can't imagine how difficult it is for me being brand manager for Virginia Slims," Williams moaned without also having to worry about slack sales in Sac-

When asked why, Williams replied in a whisper: "Everyone thinks I'm a girl."

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